

5
*A Sincere Zeal for the Protestant Interest
and our Happy Constitution in CHURCH
and STATE.*

Recommended in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

SUMMER-ASSIZES,

HOLDEN AT

Chelmsford in E S S E X,

J U L Y the 18th. 1716.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice *PARKER*,

And the Honourable

Mr. Justice *P O W I S.*

By *R. SKERREI*; M. A. *K*
Lecturer of *St. Peter's-Cornhill*, Rector of *Oakley*
in the County of *Suffolk*, and Chaplain to the
Right Honourable the *LORD MAYOR.*

*Published at the Request of the HIGH SHERIFF, and
the Gentlemen of the GRAND INQUEST.*

L O N D O N:

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T O
WILLIAM COLE, Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of *Essex*.

A N D
To the GENTLEMEN of the GRAND
INQUEST for the said County.

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Edmund Williamson, Esq;	

GENTLEMEN,



IN Compliance with Tour Earnest Request I have published the following Sermon; and therefore recommend it to Tour Patronage and Protection: Not doubting but You will as Heartily countenance and defend it against all Opposers, as You heard it with Delight and Attention. The Imperfections of this Discourse may perhaps expose it to Censure from Some, and the Subject of it render it unacceptable to Others; but the honest Intention with which it was composed, will I hope procure it as favourable an Acceptance with all the Sincere Friends of our happy Constitution, as it hath Already met with Approbation from You.

We are told indeed that the Pulpit is no proper Place for Politicks, and that the Clergy ought not to meddle with State Affairs. But such Persons will do well to

remember, that to preach up Loyalty and Obedience to our Governours, is not meddling with the Affairs of State but of the Gospel; and therefore may, and ought always to be inculcated as Occasion requires. And never sure was there more Occasion for enforcing these necessary Christian Vertues than at Present; when these Admirable Preservatives against Sedition and Riots, are by Artful Pretences made the Support and Encouragement to the most Licentious Proceedings.

Being call'd to preach before the Body of this County, I thought I could not better discharge the Duty incumbent upon me, than by Endeavouring to open the Eyes of the Delud'd and put the more Knowing upon their Guard; that neither of These may be led away by any Misrepresentation of Persons or Things, but stedfastly adhere to their true Interest in the Defence of their Religious and Civil Rights: Which are utterly inconsistent with Arbitrary Power, and therefore never to be preserv'd in a Popish Reign.

I wish indeed that the Success of this Undertaking may be answerable to my sincere Intentions. But this may be rather wish'd for than reasonably expected, when so many more Excellent Endeavours to this purpose have been used in vain. However 'tis the Duty of every true Lover of the Present Government to do his Utmost in the Service of it, as he meets with Opportunity; and leave the Issue of his Endeavours to the Disposal of that good Providence, which orders all Events in the best and most agreeable Way. That the same good Providence may give Success to all Your Designs and Undertakings for the Publick Good, is the hearty Prayer of

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Obedient Servant,

R. SKERRET.



GALAT. 5. *Ver. 1.*

*Stand fast therefore in the Liberty
wherewith Christ hath made us
free; and be not entangled again
with the Yoke of Bondage.*



THE chief Intention of St. Paul in this Epistle to the *Galatians*, was to obviate and root out those Unreasonable Notions, infused into them by the Craft and Subtlety of some Designing Men, concerning the *Necessity* of still adhering to the Law of *Moses*, that Yoke of *Bondage* which neither their *Fathers* or *Themselves* were able to bear. And the better to convince them of the *Unreasonableness* of the Notions they had imbibed, He argues with them in the Chapter preceding That whereof my *Text* is a Part, from an *Allegory* fix'd upon an Historical Passage in the Writings of *Moses* himself relating to *Sarah* and *Agar*, * the One a *Bond-Maid* and the Other a *Free-Woman*; the Condition and Circumstances of whose Children *Isaac* and *Ismael* must according to the standing Laws of Every Country be equally Different.

* Verse 22.

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These Mothers in the Application, we are told Verse the 24th, are the Two Covenants; the One made under the Law of *Moses*, the Other established by the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*: And consequently their Children answer to the Persons living under these respective Covenants. We Christians then, as the *Apostle* goes on to argue, who expect to be justify'd by the *Evangelical* Covenant, are far from any Obligation to regard or pay Obedience to the *Mosaick* Institutions: For we, *Brethren*, are not Children of the Bond Woman but of the Free. From whence he infers by way of Caution in the Words before Us; *Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.*

Which Words, though they have a more Immediate Reference to that Freedom from Legal Rites and Burthensome Ceremonies, which the *Galatians* enjoy'd by their Conversion to Christianity; yet the Reason of the Inference holds Equally good, with respect to every other valuable Liberty, which our *Saviour* confers upon Private Persons, or vouchsafes to any Community professing his True Religion. We of this Kingdom had the Happiness to be called very Early out of *Darkness* and *Pagan* Superstition, into the glorious Light and Profession of the Gospel; and have been long since rescued from the Bondage and Slavery of our *Romish* Taskmasters: Whose Attempts to reduce Us have been Numerous and Subtle, Bloody and *Unchristian*; and such as plainly prove They seek not *Us* but *Ours* in all their Endeavours.

Nor will it be improper to say, that *Christ* hath freed us from this Bondage and Slavery. For, as a *Learned Person* comments upon the Text, "since
" after

“ after the Resurrection of Christ all Power was
 “ committed to him as cloath’d in Human Na-
 “ ture, and he was given to be Head over all
 “ things to the Church. Whatever Publick Blef-
 “ sings are conferr’d upon a Nation professing
 “ his True Religion; particularly such, whereby
 “ not only their *Civil* but also their *Spiritual* Li-
 “ berties are preserved to them; are reasonably
 “ to be ascribed to *Him*, who is the great *Agent*
 “ for the Father, in directing and governing, in
 “ preserving and defending his *Church* and *People*
 “ in the World.

The *English* Church and Nation then have a
 Concern in these Words no less than the *Galatians*.
 To *Us* is this Admonition applicable as well as to
 these *New Converts*; And ’tis but shifting the
 Scene from *Them* to the *Kingdom* whereunto we
 belong; and we may reasonably suppose St. Paul
 addressing himself to *Us* in the very same Words
 which he makes use of in the *Text*. *Stand fast*
therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made
us free; and be not entangled again with the Yoke of
Bondage. For the better Understanding and Im-
 provement whereof, I intend to enlarge upon them
 in this plain and easie Method

First, I shall enquire into the Nature of *that*
Liberty wherewith Christ hath made Us free, and
 wherein ’tis Our Duty to stand Immoveably fast.

Secondly, I shall shew what great Reason we
 have to exhort One another Daily, to *stand fast in*
that Liberty whereunto we are called, lest we shou’d
 be *entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage*. And,

Thirdly, I shall lay before You some proper
 Rules and Directions, by the due Observance
 whereof we may, thro’ the *Divine Assistance*, be
 enabled to *stand fast in this valuable Liberty*.

First

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First then, I shall enquire into the Nature of *that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made Us free*, and wherein 'tis our Duty to stand Immoveably fast. This is Twofold *Civil and Religious*. Which are so closely linked together in Our Present Case and Circumstances, that We can't be deprived of *This* without losing *That*; nor enjoy the *One* but in Conjunction with the *Other*: And both Which are so valuable in their Own *Nature* and with respect to *Us*, that what *Solomon* says of *Wisdom* is very applicable to *These*.
** The Merchandise thereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold. More pretious are they than Rubies; and all the Things that can be desired are not to be compared unto them.* The Love of Liberty with Life is given; and Life it self is much the Inferiour Gift. One Day spent in the Enjoyment of this *Double Blessing*, is preferable to a Thousand under a *Tyrant's* Reign.

In regard our *Spiritual Liberty* is of a higher Nature and in *Time* preceding our *Civil Freedom*: I choose therefore to *begin* with a short Account of *That*. We are the *Offspring* of those dark and benighted *Gentiles*; of whose Vices and Superstition the *Apostle* gives such a Melancholy Relation in his Epistle to the *Romans*; and our Ancestors once a part of *These* as Vile and Superstitious as *Any* mentioned there. In process of Time it pleased Almighty God, from whom every good and perfect Gift proceeds, in great Pity and Compassion to their Miserable State, to cause the Sun of Righteousness, that Sun which rises with Healing under his Wings, to shed his Rays so

very far and wide upon this Superstitious and benighted *Isle*; that the darkeſt and moſt diſtant Corners thereof quickly felt his chearing *Influence*, and vaſt Numbers were thereby brought to the Knowledge and Profeſſion of *the Truth in Jeſus*.

Thus was the Idolatry and Superſtition of the *Gentile World* quite extirpated from Hence; and Men attained to rational, conſiſtent and worthy *Notions* of God and Religion. But it was not very many Years, before this bright Noon-Day Sun of Knowledge and Inſtruction *in the Paths of Righteouſneſs and Truth*, was clouded and obſcured by the returning *Miſts* of Ignorance and Error; and the Inhabitants of the Land led wrong again in Matters relating to *Faith* and *Practice*, by the Craft and Subtlety of *Romiſh Emiſſaries*, who have Always *lain in wait to deceive* the Ignorant and Unwary: and who never ſcruple to *compaſs Sea and Land to make a Proſelyte*; and when he is Once made, like the Scribes and Pharifees, *they make him, if poſſible, twofold more the Child of Hell than Themſelves*.

When the Religion of *Rome* was introduced into the *Britiſh Church*, it laid a *Yoke of Bondage* upon the Necks of its *Proſelytes*, more galling and intolerable than the *Mosaick Law*. For there returned with *This*, Idolatry, Superſtition, falſe Doctrines and Worſhip; together with thoſe pernicious *Vices and Corruptions* from which the Nation had been happily freed. And to increaſe the *Weight* of this Uneaſie Yoke, there were added unto it an *Unlimited Obedience* to the Biſhop of *Rome*; an *Implicite Faith* in all the Articles which that Church believes; a *blind Dependance* upon the

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Intention of the Priest for the *Efficacy* of both Sacraments; and a *servile Compliance* with many vain and ridiculous *Injunctions*; contrary to the plain Dictates of *Reason* and the Voice of *Scripture*.

How eminently conspicuous the *Good Providence* of God shewed it self, by making King *Henry the Eighth* the happy Instrument of recovering this Nation out of these slavish Circumstances into a State of Perfect Freedom, *we have heard with Our Ears*, and the History of the *Reformation* is sufficiently plain. Other Instances of the same watchful and good *Providence Our Own Eyes have seen*, in the frequent *Disappointments* of the Counsels and Endeavours of our *Romish* Adversaries to reduce us; and in our being still continued Members of that *Protestant Church* establish'd by the Reformation. "A Church, "we are assured by one that knows its Constitution, of whose Faith and Practice God's "written Word is the Rule, and of whose Interpretation of that Word, the Sense of the First "and Purest Ages is the Standard. Whose Worship and Ceremonies are solemn without Pre- "ciseness, and decent without Superstition: Whose "Offices are sound and prudent, apt and edifying; and whose Doctrines not only dare, but "desire to be seen without Disguise, and carefully "examined by all its Enemies as well as Friends.

The Religion which the Established Church of *England* professes, most heartily Embraces the *Whole Counsel of God*, but with just Indignation rejects the Additional Articles of *Men*; and will not suffer either Idolatry in *Practice*, or Contradiction in *Belief*, to be imposed upon her Members as Terms necessary to Salvation. A Religion,

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gion, to which agrees that Character given by St. James † of the Wisdom which descends from Above, that is *first Pure then Peaceable, Gentle, Easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and Good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisie.* In short, The Church, wherein *Most of Us* have the Happiness to be *baptized and educated*, professes every thing truly *Primitive and Christian* which the Church of Rome can reasonably pretend to; and wants Nothing of that *Nature* which any Other *Religious Society* enjoys. Such is that *Spiritual Liberty* into Which we have been called, and wherein 'tis Our Duty to stand. And

Our *Civil Liberty* is Equally valuable. For as we profess a Religion exactly calculated for the Perfection of Divine and Humane, Moral and Social, Private and Publick Vertues; so 'tis our Peculiar *Advantage* to live under the best constituted, the Only happy Government in *Europe*: And might therefore become at Once the *Admiration and Praise* of All the Neighbouring Nations, did not our *Animosities* and Unreasonable *Heats* withhold this Blessing from us. We continue to be what Our Neighbours formerly were; and securely enjoy what They have Unfortunately lost. We know no Subjection to the *Higher Powers* but what the *standing Laws* of the Constitution prescribe; in the *making or repealing* whereof, the *whole Nation* have a Part by their Representatives in *Parliament*: And therefore can suffer no *Hardships* or *Inconvenience* but by their Own Consent and Choice. And 'tis an approved Maxim, that *no Injury can be done to a Willing Mind.*

Whilst the Subjects of Other *Potentates* disquiet themselves in vain, by *treasuring up Riches*, for the

† Chap. 3, v. 17.

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Enjoyment whereof they must depend upon their *Sovereign's Will*: 'tis *Our Happiness* to see *Our Rights* and *Possessions* so strongly guarded by the known *Constitution of the Realm*; that we may securely eat the *Fruit of Our Labours every Man under his Own Vine and Fig-Tree*, without any fear of Evil either to *Our Goods* or *Persons* from *Arbitrary Power*. What supports the Honour and Dignity of the *Crown* equally guards the *Subjects Property*; and if the King can do no *Wrong* the Subject can't *Lawfully* suffer Any.

Many bold *Attempts* have been made to throw down these valuable *Fences*; and as subtle and unwearied Endeavours used to introduce *Illegal* and *Arbitrary Power* amongst Us. But These the *watchful Providence* of God hath Always seasonably disappointed: And at the same time ordered Matters so, that *Our Safety* should come not from *Our Own*, but from a *nobler* and *higher Hand*. A Hand that deliver'd Us from the late *Unnatural Rebellion*; that still upholds Us in the *Liberty wherein we stand*, and in Which we trust to be delivered from all the *Future Conspiracies* of as Many, as have *Evil-Will* against *Our Israel*: To whose present State and Circumstances the Words of *Moses* are very applicable. † *What Nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them; as the Lord our God is in All that we call upon him for? And what Nation is there so great that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as Those which I have set before You this Day? Only take Heed to thy Self and keep thy Soul diligently; lest Thou forget the Things which thine Eyes have seen; and lest they depart from thy Heart all the Days of thy Life.*

† Deut. 4. 7, 8, 9.

If therefore ' Our Properties as a *People*, and
' our Reformation as a *Church*: If the Rights
' of a Monarchy independent upon the Supre-
' macy of *Rome*; and the *Allegiance* of Subjects
' free from the Controul of *Foreign* Tyranny or a
' *Domestick* Yoke: If the Privileges which we
' claim by our Statutes as *Britains*, and the yet
' more sacred and inviolable Rights belonging
' to Us as *Christians*: If these Advantages, which
make up Our *Spiritual* and *Civil* Liberty, deserve
our Notice and Esteem: Doubtless it will be
worth Your while to attend seriously to my

Second Head. Under which I shall shew what
great Reason we have to exhort One another
Daily to *stand fast in that Liberty* whereunto we
are called, lest we should be *entangled again with*
the Yoke of Bondage. And this will very Evident-
ly appear, whether we take a View of those *Un-*
wearied Endeavours, which are used to Overthrow
our *Stedfastness* in this Liberty: or whether we
reflect upon the Special Care of *Providence* to
continue this Liberty to Us in all times of *Dan-*
ger and *Extremity*: Or whether we consider the
Inexcusable Folly of suffering Ourselves to be mis-
led, *by the cunning Craftiness of such as lie in Wait*
to deceive; when we can neither pretend to be
ignorant of their *Craft* and *Diligence*, or of the
Miseries of being led astray by *Either* of These.

1st then let Us take a View of those *Unwearied*
Endeavours which are used, to Overthrow our
Stedfastness in the Liberty whereunto we are cal-
led. 'Tis with Us at Present as it was in the
Apostle's Time: There are many *Seducers* crept in
privily amongst Us, Emissaries from *Rome* and
Managers of the *Popish Interest*; who are instru-
cted

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sted in all the Arts of *Treachery* and *Deceit*, and stick at Nothing to bring about their desperate and wicked *Contrivances*: Men that call *Good Evil, and Evil Good*; that will upon all Occasions turn *Religion into Rebellion and Faith into Faction*; and pretend their good *Intention* will sanctifie the most *Unlawful Means*. But what is Matter of more *Wonder* and *Uneasiness* to all honest and considering Minds: These busie Agents for *Rome* and a *Popish Interest* are supported by Men, who indeed call themselves sincere Friends to the *Establish'd Church and Constitution*; but yet by a strange and melancholy Combination with these Sons of *Violence* and *Mischief*, labour hard to promote the *Romish Cause*, at the same time that they declare themselves in the Interest of the *Present Establishment*.

By these and such like Practices of restless and designing Men, have the *deluded* Multitude, a People naturally well-inclin'd, and fam'd Heretofore for a due Regard to their *Spiritual* and *Civil* Liberty, been insensibly betrayed into an Obstinate and Shameful Indifferency for *Both*; and are so far removed from their ancient Aversion to *Popery*, that Many are brought to *believe* and Some to *confess* That Yoke of *Bondage*, much preferable to their present State of *Freedom* and *Happiness*.

When the late causeless *Rebellion* was happily suppress'd, and the Unnatural Designs of the Persons concern'd in it fully discover'd; it was highly reasonable to expect, that the Seeds of *Murmuring, Discontent* and *Sedition* would have perished with that desperate Undertaking. But instead thereof, great Endeavours are *Daily* used to instruct the Ignorant and Unwary, not only in new and distinguishing Methods of *Sedition*; but

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to improve them likewise in more refined Arts of *Slander and Discontent*.

When there is no manner of Breach upon the *Church's Power*, no Invasion of the *Subject's Right*, nor any other just and reasonable Ground of *Discontent*; Measures not thought on, Things that may but *Possibly* be attempted, are talked in Conversation with the same *Certainty* as if *Actually* done. If the Administration is to be render'd Unacceptable to the People, the Dealers in *State-Slander* will pretend to reconcile *Contradictions*; and rather than fail of Success in their Seditious Attempts, venture to assert the very same Thing to be *True* and *False* as Occasion requires. And what more plainly shews the *Industry* of these designing Men to do *Mischief*: they study to find out such *traiterous* and *artful* Measures, as often make it *Morally* Impossible for the Prince to avoid the *Murmurings* of the People, by what Method soever He chuses to act.

How ungratefully is *Mercy* interpreted *Fear* in the Government, and *Justice* maliciously styled *Cruelty*? And what vile Insinuations and unjustifiable Reports have been handed about on purpose to raise *Jealousies* and *Discontent* in the Minds of the Credulous and Unthinking, for the regular Execution of a *Criminal*, whose Sacred Character increased his Guilt and aggravated his Crime? Though it be manifest both from *Reason* and the *Consequence* of Things, that Undeserved Pity naturally tends to the Prejudice of the *Commonwealth*; and takes off from that *Mercy* which is justly due to the *Peaceable* and *Honest*, in the equal Distribution of Justice to Offenders of every kind, that Others may hear and fear, and commit no such *Wickedness*.

If

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If therefore such *Unwearied Endeavours* are used in all Parts of the Kingdom, to reconcile Men to *Popery* and alienate their Affections from the *Present Government*; It highly concerns *Every One* of Us to be circumspect and watchful that *no Evil Communication corrupt our Good Manners*; nor any false Representation of *Persons* or *Things* tempt Us into a mean Opinion of that *Liberty* wherein we stand. More especially if we reflect,

2dly, Upon the Special Care of *Providence* to continue this Liberty to Us, in all Times of *Danger* and *Extremity*. It would be an Endless Undertaking to reckon up All the many Distinguishing Providences, to which we owe the Preservation of our *Spiritual* and *Civil* Liberty ever since the *Reformation*: I shall therefore content my self with mentioning Such only as are most Evident and Material to my Present Purpose.

Such are the favourable Conjunction of Affairs, by which this Liberty was preserved in its *Infant* Years under King *Edward VI.* The *Continuance* of it when so much persecuted in Queen *Mary's* Days: The flourishing State it was supported in during Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign: The threaten'd Ruin from which it was rescued by that discerning Spirit wherewith the Almighty endued King *James I.* above all his Councillours: The eminent Deliverance of it by the *Revolution* from the Malice of its Subverters: And the happy Prospect it hath of a Settled Prosperity under his present *Majesty's* wise Administration. What the *Psalmist* says * concerning *Israel* is very applicable to the Variety of Our Affairs, *Many a time have my Enemies fought against me from my Youth up may Israel now say. Tea, many a time have they vexed me from my Youth up, but they*

* Psalm 129. 1, 2, 3, 4.

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have not prevailed against me. The Plowers plowed upon my Back and made long Furrows : But the righteous Lord hath hewn the Snares of these Ungodly in pieces.

The Goodness of God in his repeated Deliverances and continued Care of our Religious and Civil Rights, ought in reason to be look'd upon as an Undoubted Token of His approving These: And consequently should become the most powerful and concluding Argument to Us, to think well of, and heartily value the *Constitution* we live under ; and never be wanting in our Endeavours by all lawful and prudent Methods to *promote*, and as much as in Us lies *secure* the Continuance of this valuable Enjoyment. After so many seasonable Escapes from Danger, *like a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler* ; and in These, so many comfortable Testimonies of the special Care of Providence over Us: We shall shew Ourselves *Unworthy* of these past Blessings and Escapes, if we do not stand fast in the Liberty wherewith *Christ* hath made Us *free* ; and at *least* appear as zealous and endeavouring to perpetuate *That*, as our Enemies do to *entangle Us again with the Yoke of Bondage*. For consider,

3dly, The inexcusable Folly of suffering Ourselves to be misled, by the *cunning Craftiness* of such as lie in wait to deceive ; when we can neither pretend to be ignorant of their *Craft* and *Diligence*, or of the *Miseries* which must attend our being led Astray by Either of These. 'Tis needless to look back upon the Attempts of Our Enemies in *Former Reigns* ; when the Measures taken in raising and fomenting the late groundless *Rebellion*, so plainly prove to every dispassionate and unprejudiced Mind their *Subtlety* and *Zeal*, to destroy the Church of *England* and overturn Our *Constitution*. For what could be intended less by a

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Rebellion engag'd in Vigorously by *Papists* at Home, supported by large Contributions from *Papists* Abroad, and carry'd on by the United Endeavours of *Papists* and *Protestants* to restore the *Pretender*?

What Person at all acquainted with the true Spirit of *Popery* needs to be told, that *This* can neither be *maintained* or *introduced* in any Nation but by *Arbitrary Power*; which confounds Right and Wrong, and governs *Absolutely* without Reason or Controul. And can any Man be so void of Judgment and Thought, to believe the *Papists* would hazard their *Lives and Fortunes* in their late traiterous *Enterprize*, for the Defence and Protection of the *Established Church*? The *Extirpation* whereof they are obliged, both by their *Principles* and *Interest*, to endeavour upon every favourable Opportunity.

Whatever they might pretend to keep their *Protestant* Friends in *Countenance*; their Design was to involve Our most excellent *Church* and *Constitution* in all those *Miseries*, which both Reason and Experience prove to be Inseparable from a *Popish* Reign. And these under the *Return* of the *Romish* Religion as a Judgment upon *Protestants*, for giving up that Liberty which the *Providence* of God had so *Often* wonderfully preserved, would have been Such as *Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive the like*.

'Tis therefore strictly incumbent upon You my Brethren, seeing You know *These Things before*, to beware lest You also being led away by the Error of the *Wicked*, fall from Your Own *Stedfastness* either in Principle or Practice. Doubtless 'tis not only a *Security*, but ought to be likewise a powerful

Motive

Motive to such *Watchfulness*, to know the *Devices* of an Enemy and our Own *Danger* from These. And He who either by neglecting or despising such useful *Knowledge*, shall suffer himself to be seduced into any *vile* or *unwarrantable* Measures; deserves to stand in *History* a lasting Monument of Infamy, Reproach, and inexcusable Folly. For the Royal Preacher observes, that even *Irrational* Creatures by mere *Instinct* are capable of preserving themselves from all *visible* Snares; * *Surely*, says he, *in vain the Net is spread in sight of any Bird*: Much less therefore should Men of *Reason* and *Thought* be led Captive at the Will of any *Seducers*, when they are so well acquainted with the *Devices* by which These lie in wait to deceive. For the better Security of *Ourselves* against the *Craft* and *Subtlety* of Such as would mislead Us; I shall lay before You under my

Third Head, some proper Rules and Directions; by the due Observance whereof we may, thro' the *Divine Assistance*, be enabled to stand fast in the Liberty we enjoy. And amongst Many that might be named, I shall, for Brevity sake, only recommend these *Three* which follow. A hearty Union amongst Ourselves: Not giving Ear to evil Suggestions against his *Majesty's* Person or Administration: And using the Liberty we enjoy as becomes good Christians.

1st, A hearty Union amongst Ourselves. This *St. Peter* expresses † in his Epistle to the *Jewish* Converts by there being all of one Mind; having Compassion One of another; loving as Brethren; being pitiful and courteous. Contrary to which are those pernicious Qualities of Envy and Dissention, Hatred, Malice and Uncharitableness, by which our

* Prov. 1. 17. † 1 Pet. 3. 8.

20 A SERMON preach'd at the

Enemies have been long endeavouring to *Divide*, in order to *Enslave Us*. Blessed be God! our Religious and Civil Liberties stand at *present* upon the same happy Eoundation, upon which his *Providence* placed them by the Endeavours of King *William* of Glorious Memory; and we have good Reason to promise Ourselves the *Continuance* of These, under the Influences and Guardianship of his Majesty King *GEORGE*, and a Succession of Princes in the *Protestant Line*.

But yet, since the Ruin of Societies so naturally follows upon their *Heats* and *Divisions*, We have, notwithstanding our *present* Security, Ground enough to *fear*, lest, by going on to distinguish Ourselves with *foolish* and *Unchristian* Badges, the more Effectually to bite and devour Each Other, we be devoured One of Another, or which is much the same by the Common Enemy: And thereby be convinced by too sensible an *Experiment*, * that every Kingdom divided against it Self is brought to Desolation.

Was not *Rebellion* against our Lawful Sovereign the Sin of *Witchcraft*, no less than That which is at any time committed against the *Almighty Governor* of the World; it would be just Matter of Astonishment by what Means *Subjects* could be thereby persuaded, at Once to destroy their *Own* Happiness and the *Publick* Peace; forfeit all the *Blessings* which They enjoy in a settled Government; and run *blindfold* upon that Destruction † which is the End, says the Wiseman, of Those, who are given to change. By strange and unaccountable *Magick* have the Emissaries of *Rome* carried on their Designs against the Peace and Happiness of these *Kingdoms*, ever since We shook off their *Slavish*

* Mat. 12. 25. † Prov. 24. 21, 22.

Yoke. But their most *successful* Enchantment hath appear'd in our Unreasonable *Feuds* and our *Party Quarrels*.

The best, the only Method therefore, to disappoint their wicked *Devices* and consult the Welfare and Security of the *Present Establishment*, is to order our whole Conduct and Actions by the *Apostle's Rule* *, when directing that *the Strong should not despise the Weak, nor the Weak judge the strong* : That the more Knowing † *should with Meekness instruct Those that Oppose themselves* : And that the *Opposers* should lay aside all Faction and Animosities, || *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. But,

2dly, If we wou'd stand fast in that valuable *Liberty* wherewith *Christ* hath made us free ; we must never give Ear to Evil Suggestions against his Majesty's Person or Administration. The speaking Evil of *Dignities* and vilifying their Authority, is a *Complicated Iniquity* which hath prevail'd more or less in *All Ages* of the World ; but never with greater Malignity and less Reason than in *Our Days*. By these Undutiful Proceedings, the *Subjects* Confidence in the Wisdom and Integrity of the *Prince* hath not only been weaken'd, but insensible corrupted likewise into *groundless* Fears concerning the Government it Self. And under such ill Impressions they have put the very worst Construction upon all his *Designs* and *Actions* ; and in Consequence thereof been more easily led away from their *Duty* and *Allegiance* into favourable Thoughts of a *Change*.

How different is this Behaviour to That which *Moses* commanded the *Israelites* in the Case of Idolatry ? *Thou shalt enquire*, says he, *and make Search and ask Diligently ; and behold if it be Truth and the*

* Rom. 14. 3. † 2 Tim. 2. 25. || Eph. 4. 3.

22 A SERMON preach'd at the
thing certain; Then, but not before, shall the Sen-
tence of Condemnation pass upon the Idolatrous
Person. And yet the very same Caution ought to be
us'd in censuring all *Publick* Persons and Actions;
neither should any Report or crafty Insinuation be
receiv'd against Men in *Power*, till it be confirmed
by good Authority upon sufficient Proof.

Could this equitable Method of Proceeding be
established amongst Us, no Designs would then be
charged upon our Governors against the *Church* or
Constitution; nor should we be weary'd with vile
and compassionate Speeches in favour of those *Ma-
lignants*, who endeavour'd to change the Present
Administration into an *Arbitrary* Government, and
lay a *Yoke* upon our Necks under the specious Pre-
tence of preserving Our *Liberty*. But on the contra-
ry, instead of Any *One* being dissatisfy'd or uneasie
under the Publick Management of Affairs, we
should *All* cheerfully confide in his *Majesty's* known
Wisdom and exemplary Care; and act upon all
Occasions *Sincerely* for the Publick Good; as the
proper Means to continue *Him* a Glorious Prince,
and *Ourselves* a Free People.

Once more. Let us use the Liberty we enjoy as
becomes good Christians. By virtue of their *Chri-
stian* Profession, Men are strictly bound to improve
in Goodness, in proportion to that *Measure* of Know-
ledge and Power to do well bestowed upon them.
Upon this Account a greater Degree of *Piety* and
Charity, and those other valuable Fruits of the *spi-
rit*, will be required of *some Parts* of the Christian
World above *Others*; according as the Light they
enjoy is *Purer*, and less corrupted by Superstition,
Ignorance, and the *Remains* of ancient Heathenism.
And, by the same Argument, we of this *Church* and
Nation, who are blessed with much greater Means

of

of *knowing* and *doing* Our Duty, than any other Christian Church or People now in *Being*, ought to make our *Diligence* in pleasing God equal to the *Marks* of his Peculiar Favour to Us, and endeavour, by *His* Assistance, to become the *Best* and most *Exemplary* Men Living.

This was the Divine Will and Purpose in those many signal *Providences*, by which our Religious and Civil Liberties were established at *First*, and have been *hitherto* preserv'd amongst Us; and such a Dutiful Return to God for the *Mercies* we have receiv'd, is the most effectual Method to secure their *Continuance* not only to *Ourselves* but to the latest Posterity.

Take good heed therefore to your selves, that you love the Lord your God, and serve him in the Sincerity of your Hearts according to your Abilities; for, if we still do *Wickedly* by fomenting foolish *Jealousies*, Unreasonable *Heats*, or any other such *evil Practices* amongst *Ourselves*; we may justly expect these Obstinate Sins and Follies will *sooner* or *later* bring That Destruction upon Us, which our *Enemies* have so long labour'd *in vain* from every other Quarter.

Thus have I shew'd the Nature of that Liberty wherewith We of this *Church* and *Nation* have been Graciously made *free*: What Reason we have to watch more Especially at *this Time* against the Designs of Those, who strive to *entangle Us again in the Yoke of Bondage*; and by what Methods we may preserve that valuable Liberty wherein we stand. And having at Once inform'd you of your *Advantage* and the *Duty* consequent thereupon; I need not suture multiply Words in persuading you to live and act for the *Future* as becomes Men sensible of their Engagements with regard to These.

Dear Liberty always carry'd in it a *Magnetick* Power: Our *Ancestors* preferr'd *This* to all their
Other

Other Enjoyments; and *We* Ourselves formerly thought it a *Jewel* worth purchasing at any Rate. Away then, in the Name of God! with those *Degenerate* Principles and Measures which prevail so much at *Present*. Let us prove Ourselves the *Offspring* of those Worthy *Patriots* by a strict Imitation of their Loyalty and Truth; and endeavour upon all Occasions to act *Consistently* with Ourselves.

Choose religiously to observe your *sacred Oaths* and *Abjurations*, tho' never so Unfashionable a Practice; and dare to forsake your *Old* Companions in *Iniquity*, without regarding their Frowns or Reproaches for such *Singular* Wisdom. Believe not the *New Divinity*, neither trust the *Sophistry* of those assuming *Casuists*, who pretend no Oaths lawful which the *Present Government* imposes; nor any *Sacred Obligation* binding unless *Willingly* submitted to. And let neither Honour or Dishonour; neither Good Report or Evil Report; neither Prospect of Advantage or Fear of Inconveniency prevail with You to think any Time *improper* or *unseasonable* to speak the *Truth*, (as some foolishly urge) when called thereunto by Lawful Authority. Strive to understand the *Difference* between the Doctrines of *Rome*, and that *Primitive, Apostolick* Faith profess'd in these Kingdoms; and let the *standing Laws* of the Nation resolve all your *Politick* Scruples, the only proper Directors in Cases of such a Nature.

These Things if we do *Sincerely*, we shall Never want sufficient Motives to promote the *Protestant Interest*, and adhere stedfastly to our happy Constitution in *Church* and *State* as by Law established. In consequence whereof we need not doubt of *standing fast in the Liberty* wherewith *Christ* hath made us free: without being entangled again in the *Yoke of Bondage*.

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